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978-0-521-71962-9 - Human Rights and Social Work: Towards Rights-Based Practice,
Revised Edition

Jim Ife

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Human Rights and Social Work

Towards Rights-Based Practice

Revised Edition

Human rights ideals are at the pinnacle of contemporary social work practice and international political discourse. Yet in recent years, with the heightened threat of terrorism, we have begun to witness an erosion of many traditional civil liberties.

Set against this backdrop, the revised edition of *Human Rights and Social Work* moves beyond the limitations of conventional legal frameworks. With customary clarity and ease of style, Jim Ife challenges the notion of the 'three generations of human rights', teasing out the conceptual problems of this approach and demonstrating how the three generations actually overlap at an intrinsic level.

Essential reading for scholars, students and practitioners alike, this book shows how an implicit understanding of human rights principles can provide a foundation for practice that is central to social work, community development and the broader human services.

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About the author

EMERITUS PROFESSOR JIM IFE holds adjunct positions at the Centre for Human Rights Education at Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, and at the Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights at Deakin University, Victoria. He is a former secretary of the Human Rights Commission of the International Federation of Social Workers, and is also a former president of Amnesty International Australia. Previously, he was Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Western Australia and at Curtin University. His other publications include *Community Development* (3rd edition, 2006), *Rethinking Social Work: Toward Critical Practice* (1997) and *Human Rights from Below: Human Rights and Community Development* (forthcoming).

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Acknowledgments

FOR THE AUTHOR OF a book to claim that the ideas it contains are all his/her own is both false and arrogant. Ideas are shared, developed and reconstructed through a process of continuous dialogue, reading and collaborative praxis, and any claim to individual 'ownership' of such ideas in the form of 'intellectual property' is a nonsense. Simply writing ideas in a book, with its corresponding claim to ownership and authority, is to privilege the author over others who have had a major influence in the creative endeavour, and is, for this author at least, a source of some discomfort. Many people have contributed, often unknowingly, to the ideas in this book, and it would be impossible to acknowledge, or even to remember, them all. I owe a great deal to many encounters with students, colleagues and friends, in several different universities and in the wider community.

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Trauma Survivors, and my many friends from within both organisations, also played a major role in stimulating my thinking about human rights.

There are a number of changes to the revised edition, brought about by a continuing engagement with issues related to human rights, principally at the Centre for Human Rights Education at Curtin University, where it has been my privilege to work since 2003. I owe particular debts of gratitude to Linda Briskman, Lucy Fiske, Riccardo Baldissone and Rafiq Khan, for ongoing dialogue. As well as these people, many other students and colleagues at Curtin University and the University of Western Australia have provided me with stimulating work environments, in which these ideas could be developed. The staff at Cambridge University Press have been consistently supportive of this project, throughout both editions of the book.

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Like the first edition, this new edition is dedicated to the people of Ermera and Gleno in East Timor, who in August 1999 taught me about human rights. Their inspiration, eight years later, remains strong.